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[Owen, Robert Dale]

THE

MORAL PHYSIOLOGY;

A TREATISE

ON POPULAR QUESTIONS.

OR

MEANS DEVISED TO CHECK PREGNANCY

BY A PHYSICIAN.

NEW-YORK :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

1836.

Некрополь

УРОДЛЯЩИЕ ДАНОМ

МАКСИМ А.

ЗАКОЛЮЩИЕ КАШТОВЫ

и

ЧЕРНОВОДЫЙ ПОДСОБОЙ СВЕДЕНИЕ ОДНОГО МАЛАКА.

МАКСИМ А. ЧУ

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ЧЕРНОВОДЫЙ
ПОДСОБОЙ ДОЛЖЕН
БЫТЬ

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11731707 30 JUNE

July 1st 1863. I awoke this morning
at 4 o'clock, having had a few hours of sleep.
The morning was bright & clear, & I spent a good
hour in the woods, at the foot of the hill.
I observed two species of birds which I had not
seen before, a small sparrow-like bird, & a
small, dark-colored sparrow-like bird. These were
the first birds I have seen here, & I am
not quite sure what they are. They were
both very small, & I could not get them
into my gun. I think they must be
harmless little birds, & I hope they will
not be too much trouble to me.

P R E F A C E .

IT is a notorious fact, that the families of the married often increase beyond what a regard for the young beings coming into existence, or the happiness of those who give them birth, would dictate ; and philanthropists of first rate moral character, in different parts of the world, have for years, been endeavoring to obtain and disseminate, a knowledge of means whereby men and women may refrain, at will, from becoming parents, without even a partial sacrifice of the pleasures which attend the gratification of their productive instinct. But no satisfactory means of fulfilling this object were discovered, until the subject received the attention of a Physician who had devoted some years to the investigation of this subject on the human system.

And upon this principle I devise checks, which reason alone will convince them must be effectual, and which have proved to be effectual, from actual experience.

This work, besides conveying knowledge, there will be several checks which will be equally effectual, but not as convenient as the one which will be spoken of, (the sponge properly used) and which has been used for a number of years, by some individuals, as being the most safe, efficacious, and satisfactory, without inconvenience and with but little trouble or expense.

The great utility of such a work as this, especially to the poor, who live, and fill our Poor Houses with innocent children, to be supported at the expense of the counties or towns, is ample apology (if apology be needed) for its publication.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

On the Effects of Onanism.



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On the Effects of Onanism.

For an explanation of Onanism, I would refer you to the XXXVIII Chapter of Genesis. But, generally, a term used to denote a continual or habitual use of the hand. It is universally believed that too frequent a use will bring on Atropha, (a general wasting of the system) and, in fact, will bring on a gleety discharge, which will be both difficult and tedious to cure, and occasion a disease known to Medical men as Gonorrhœa Dormientium. This weakness they erroneously attribute to the discharges ; and under these circumstances, they think themselves altogether disqualified for the married state.

Finally, the genital and mental organs act and react upon each other so perniciously, as to cause a degree of nervous debility, emaciation and melancholy —in a word, a wretchedness that sets description at defiance. Nothing cures this so effectually as marriage.

The following is the most extraordinary and remarkable case of Onanism:

"A shepherd about the age of fifteen, became addicted to Onanism, and to such a degree as to practice it seven or eight times in a day. Emission became at last so difficult, that he would strive for an hour, and then discharge only a few drops of blood. At the age of six and twenty his hand became insufficient. All he could do, was to keep the penis in a continual state of priapism. He then bethought himself of tickling the internal part of his urethra, by means of a bit of wood six inches long, and he would spend in that occupation several hours, while tending his flocks in the solitude of the mountains. By a continuation of this titillation for sixteen years, the canal of the urethra became hard, callous and insensible. The piece of wood then became as ineffectual as his hand. At last, after much fruitless effort, G, one day in despair, drew from his pocket a blunt knife, and made an incision into his glands, along the course of the urethra. This operation, which would have been painful to any body else, was, in him, attended with a sensation of pleasure, followed by a

copious emission.—He had recourse to his new discovery every time his desires returned. When, after an incision into the cavernous bodies, the blood flowed profusely, he stopped the hemorrhage, by applying around the penis a pretty tight ligature.—At last, after repeating the same process, perhaps a thousand times, he ended in splitting his penis into two equal parts, from the orifice of the penis to the scrotum, very near to the symphysis pubis.—When he had got so far, unable to carry his incision any farther, and again reduced to new privations, he had recourse to a piece of wood, shorter than the former: he introduced it into what remained of the urethra, and exciting at pleasure the extremities of the ejaculatory ducts, he provoked easily the discharge of semen. He continued this about ten years. After that long space of time, he one day introduced his bit of wood so carelessly, that it slipped from his fingers and dropped into the bladder. Excruciating pain and serious symptoms came on. The patient was conveyed to the Hospital at Narbonne. The surgeon surprised at the sight of two penes of ordinary size, both capable of erection, and in that stage diverging

on both sides, and seeing besides, from the scars, and from the callous edges of the division, that this conformation was not congenital from his birth, obliged the patient to give him an account of his life, which he did, with the details which have been related.— This wretch was cut, as for the stone, recovered of the operation, but died three months after, of an abscess in the right side of the chest, his phthisical state having been evidently brought on by the practice of Onanism carried on nearly forty years."

The habit of suffering, renders us in the end insensible to pain; but every thing in this world is balanced; and if habit lightens our evils by blunting sensibility, it on the other hand drains the source of our sweetest enjoyments.

Pleasure and pain—these two extremes of sensation, in a manner, approximate to each other, and become indifferent to him who is accustomed to them. Hence arises inconstancy, or rather that insatiable desire of varying the objects of our inclinations, that imperious want of new emotions—hence we possess with indifference what we pursued with the utmost ardour and perseverance—and even cease to be im-

pressed by those charms which once held us captivated. Now, reader, see the bad consequences of Onanism, plainly and decidedly laid before you, that which appears to be a gross error which young people are apt to indulge in. I earnestly solicit you to ward off this evil for your own good. A proper proportion of it is good. But it is impossible to point out how many times in a week would be necessary. It is varied according to the age, strength and habit of the person.

"EXCESS OF VENERY is an evil to which the newly married, when "full of blood and blue veins," are peculiarly subject. To say nothing of the jealousy which may be, and often is engendered by extra prowess in the labours of love, the effect is extremely prejudicial to health. It is similar to those consequent on self pollution. The incitements to over-labour are hard to withstand. But when we know that an unpleasant disorder, which leads to crimination and recrimination, is sometimes the result, wisdom will hear the alarm, and prevent the approaching evil. The rule of moderation is simple and certain: it is the law of our nature, to pass which is sure to procure punish-

ment. When the testicles become loose—*stop* in the career of folly. So much for the man. The rule for woman is similar. If the clitoris become relaxed,—*stop*, and save the health of both. The laws of olden time, regulating the frequency of intercourse between the married pair, were all *fudge*. The rule here noticed is the only rational *law* on the subject, and the only one which can with propriety be given”

“MODERATION in venereal pleasures has already been recommended, and some reasons for it assigned; but the subject is not yet exhausted. Some unfortunately anticipate the pleasures of after-life by enjoying too fast. They *wear out* the excitability of a delicately wrought nervous system, and the precocious, [i. e. ripe before the time] whose passion for pleasurable exercises early ripens, the more frequently fall into this snare. Nature affords the rule of moderation which can hardly be violated with impunity. It may indeed be urged that the control over acts of coition, while the man has ungratified desires, is not always within the reach of woman. Granted: but a knowledge of the rule cannot be productive of harm, and it may be useful. The affection of that man is

not worth retaining, who would knowingly jeopardise the health, and perhaps the life of his female partner. As the clitoris marks the degree of natural desire, so the *state* of that developement indicates its fitness for action, or furnishes a caution to avoid it. When it hardens by simple tittillation, without the *soft dalliance* of love, the safety of intercourse is obvious.— When it droops, *rest* is more proper than action. Ignorance of this truth is peculiarly unfortunate for the precocious, whose passion is often but a transient glow, which is soon extinguished forever.

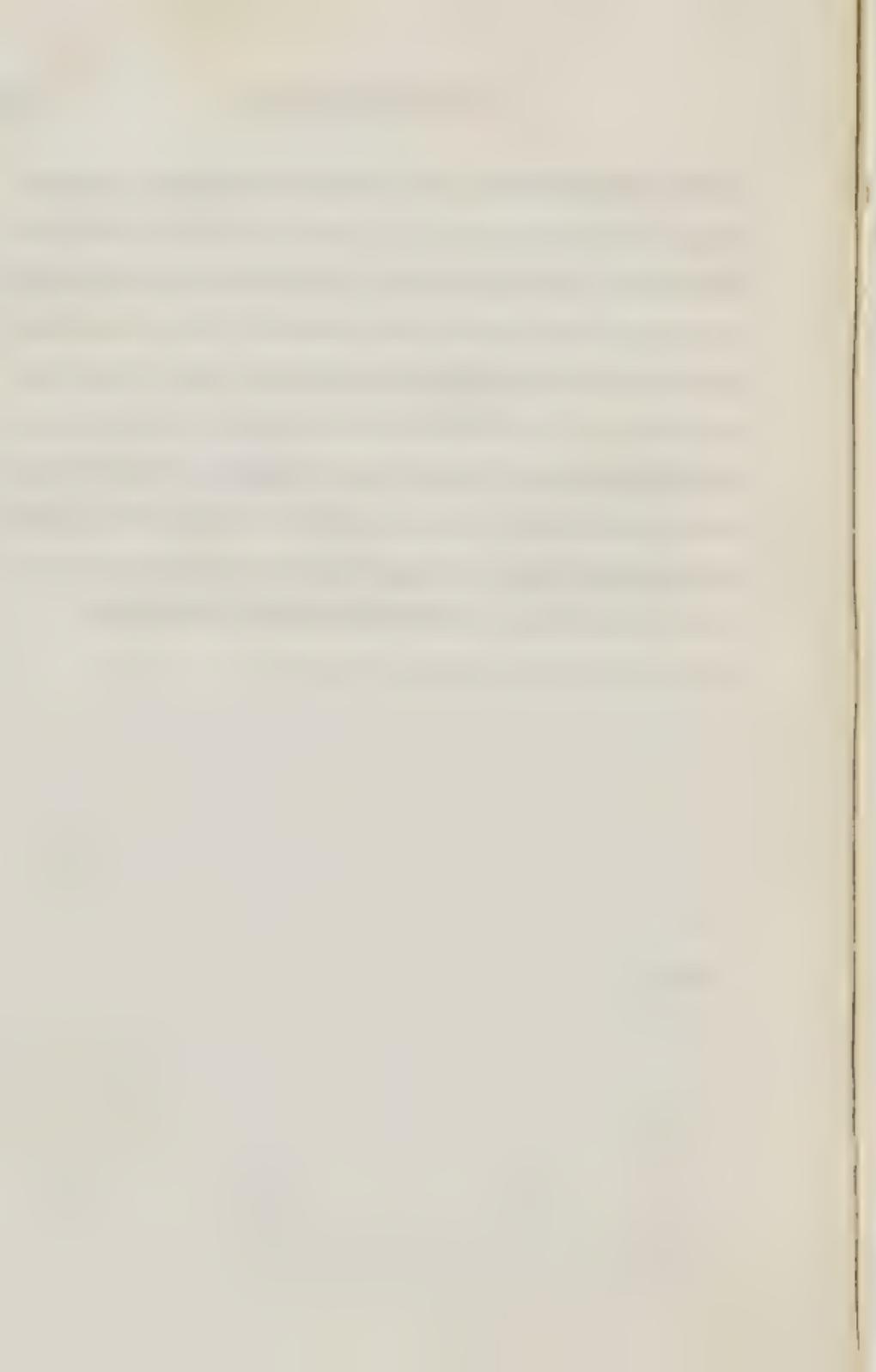
“Females are more frequently *chosen* than *choosers*. But when choice is possible, the precocious ought to choose for partners in wedlock, either those similarly situated, or men by some years the elder, that their passions may subside together. If a female has narrow hips, or a small pelvis, her choice should fall on a man narrow across the shoulders, that the offspring may be easily delivered.

“Again: the delicate, the nervous, the sentimental, ought to be joined to their counterparts—

“Loose the fierce tiger from the deer,
For native rage and native fear
Rise and forbid delight.”

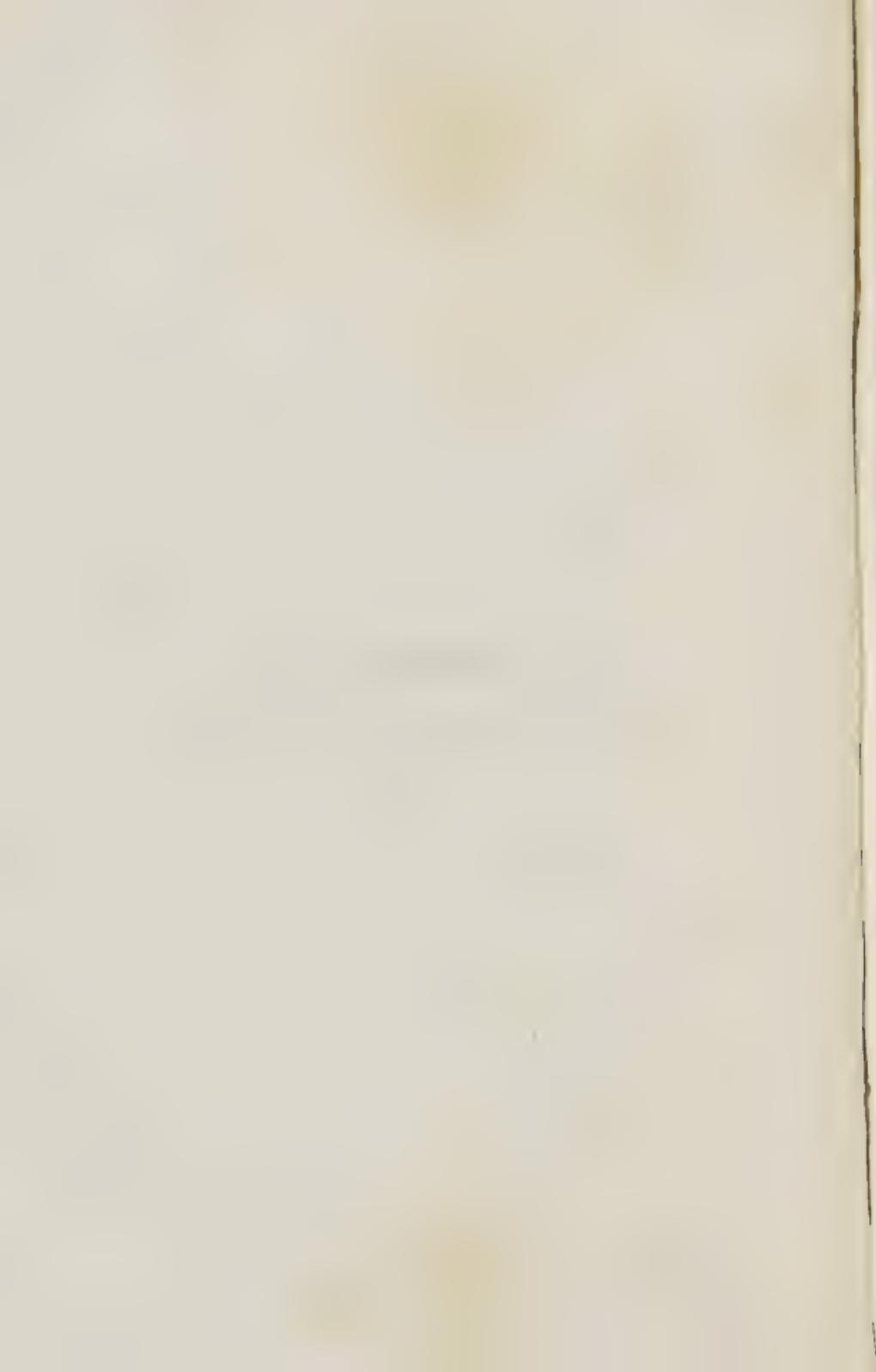
"THE GRADES OF DESIRE. Notwithstanding the variety of shades in the strength of venereal desire which appertain to different individuals, they may be ranged under three distinct heads: the fierce, the lively, and the obtuse. The first class includes those of considerable bodily powers, whose muscular strength and clumsy build betoken a mind but little moved by the gentler affections. When certain developements indicate lechery, their passion is powerful, not delicate, and they rush to the embrace with the fury of bulldogs. United to a man of this discription, the sensitive woman, though she may be endued with powers for enjoyment, is more likely to suffer than to receive pleasure. Want of delicacy in his approaches chills her finer feelings, and the connection partakes more of the nature of a rape, than of an affectionate embrace. One of this description seems to have no idea of reciprocal pleasures, and with the greediness of a glutton, is intent only on the gratification of self, no matter at what expense of feeling to the woman.—Nothing is more evident than that to men of this description, so far as affection is concerned, all women are about equal. As they value not, neithor do they

seek to gain or retain that tender attachment in which others, favoured by nature with kinder dispositions, place their chief happiness. He whose views extend not beyond mere self; who when well fed and clothed, cares not for the sufferings of the destitute—who prefers the jingling of dollars to all other music, is not a suitable partner for a delicate female. To her the *churl* ever is, and ever must be, an object of disgust. A woman of his own temperament should *match* him. Notwithstanding, I recommend early marriage.



CHAPTER II.

Statement of the subject.



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Among the human instincts which contribute to man's preservation and well doing, the instinct of reproduction holds a distinguished rank. It peoples the earth ; it perpetuates the species. Controlled by reason and chastened by good feeling, it gives to social intercourse much of its charm and zest. Directed by selfishness or governed by force, it is prolific of misery and degrading to mankind. Whether wisely or unwisely directed, its influence is that of a master principle that colours brightly or darkly much of the destiny of man.

It is sometimes spoken of as a low and selfish propensity ; and the Shakers call it a "carnal and sensual passion."* I see nothing in the instinct itself that merits such epithets.

* See a brief exposition of the principles of the United Society called Shakers," published by C. Green & Seth Y. Wells, 1830.

Like other instincts, it may assume a selfish, mercenary or brutal character. But in itself, it appears to me the most social and least selfish of all our instincts.

It fits us to give, even while receiving pleasure ; and among cultivated beings, the former power is ever more highly valued than the latter.

Not one of our instincts, perhaps, affords larger scope for the exercise of disinterestedness, or fitter play for the best moral feelings of our race. Not one gives birth to relations more gentle, more harmonizing and endearing ; not one lies more immediately at the root of the kindest charities and most generous impulses that honour and bless human nature. Its very power, indeed, gives fatal force to its aberrations— even as the calmest river, when dammed up or forced from its bed, floods and ruins the country. But the gentle flow and fortifying influence of the stream are the fit emblems of the instinct, when suffered, undisturbed by force or passion to follow its own quiet channel.

That such an instinct should be thought, and spoken of as a low, selfish propensity, and as such,

that the discussion of its nature and consequences should be almost interdicted in what is called decent society, is to me a proof of the profligacy of the age, and the impunity of the half civilized mind.

I imagine that if all men and women were gluttons and drunkards, they would in like manner be ashamed to speak of diet or temperance.

Were I an Optimist, and as such, ~~had~~ accustomed myself to judge and to admire the arrangements of nature, I should be inclined to put forward, as one of the most admirable, the arrangement according to which the temperate fulfilling of the dictates of this as well as of almost all other instincts, confers pleasure. The desire of offspring would induce us to perpetuate the species, though no gratification were connected with the act. In the language of the Optimist, then, "pleasure is graciously superadded." But instead of pausing to admire arrangements and intentions, the great whole of which reason seems little fitted to appreciate or comprehend, I content myself with remarking, that this very circumstance (in itself surely a fortunate one inasmuch as it adds another to the sources of human happiness) has often been the

cause of misery ; and from a blessing has been perverted into a curse. Enjoyment has led to excess, and sometimes to tyranny and barbarous injustice.

Were the reproductive instinct disconnected from pleasure of any kind, it would not be enjoyed, but neither would it be abused. As it is, it may be the one or the other ; just as wisdom or ignorance governs human laws, ~~habits~~ and customs. It behoves us therefore, to be especially careful in its regulation ;— else what is a man ? Great good may become for us a great evil.

This instinct, then, may be regarded in a two-fold light : first, as giving the power of reproduction : secondly as affording pleasure. And here, before I proceed, let me recall to the reader's mind, that it is the province of rational beings to bear utility strictly in view.

Reason recognises as little the romantic and unearthly reveries of stoicism, as she does the doctrines of health-destroying and mind-debasing. She reprobates equally a contemning and an abusing of pleasure. She bids avoid asceticism on the one hand,

and excess on the other. In all our enquiries then, let reason guide us, and utility be our polar star.

I have often had long arguments with my friends, and the Shakers, touching the two-fold light in which the reproductive instinct may be regarded. They commonly stand out stoutly against the propriety of considering it except simply as a means of perpetuating the species; and apart from that, they deny that it may be regarded as a legitimate source of enjoyment. In this I totally dissent from them. It is a much more noble, because less purely selfish, instinct than hunger or thirst. It is an instinct that entwines itself around the warmest feelings and best affections of the heart; and though it differ from hunger and thirst in this, that it may remain ungratified without causing death, I have yet to learn, that, because it is possible, it is therefore also desirable to mortify and suppress it. I admit, to the Shakers, that in the world, profligate and hypocritical as we see it, this instinct is the source of infinite misery; and I always freely admit to them, that if I had to choose between the life of the profligate man of the world and that of the ascetic Shaker, I should not hesitate a moment to

prefer the latter. But, for admitting that the most social and kindly of human instincts is sensual and degrading in itself, I cannot. I think its influence moral, harmonizing, polishing, beneficent; and that the social education of no man or woman is fully completed without it. Its mortification, although far less injurious than its excess, is yet very mischievous. If it do not give birth to piceousness or melancholy, or incipient disease, or unnatural practices, at least it almost always freezes and stiffens the character, by checking the flow of its kindest emotions; and not unfrequently gives to it a solitary, anti-social, selfish stamp.

I deny the position of the Shakers, then, that the instinct is justifiable only in so far as it is absolutely necessary to the reproduction of the species. It is justifiable, in my view, just in as far as it makes man a happier and a better being. It is justifiable, both as a source of temperate enjoyment, and as a means by which the sexes can mutually polish and improve each other.

If a Shaker has read my little book thus far, and cannot reconcile his mind to this idea, he may as well

shut it at once. I found all my arguments on the position, that the pleasure derived from this instinct independent of, and totally distinct from, its ultimate object, the reproduction of our race, is good, proper, worth securing and enjoying. I maintain, that its temperate enjoyment is a blessing, both in itself and in its influence on human character.

Upon this distinction of the instinct into its two-fold character hinges the chief point in the present discussion. It sometimes happens—nay, it happens every day and hour, that mankind obey its impulses, not from any calculation of consequences, but simply from animal impulse. Thus, many children that are brought into the world owe their existence, not to deliberate conviction in their parents that their birth was really desirable, but simply to an unreasonable instinct which men in the mass have not learnt either to resist or controll.

Is it desirable, that it should never be gratified without an increase of population? Or is it desirable that, in gratifying it, man shall be able to say whether offspring shall be the result or not? To answer the questions satisfactorily, it would be necessary to

substantiate that such control may be obtained without the slightest injury to the physical health, or violence to the moral feelings; and also, that it should be obtained without any real sacrifice of enjoyment; or, if that cannot be, with as little as possible. Thus have I plainly stated the subject. It resolves itself, as my readers may observe, into two distinct heads; first, the durability of such control; and secondly, its possibility.

In discussing its desirability, I enter a wide field—a field often traversed by political economists, by moralists and by philosophers: though generally it will be confessed, to little purpose. This may be in a great measure attributed rather to their fear than their ignorance.

The world would not permit them to say what they knew. I intend that my readers shall know part what I know from actual experience on the subject; for I have long since ceased to ask the superstitious people of this ball (the world) leave to say what I think and know, and what I believe to be useful to the public.

CHAPTER III.

The question examined in the abstract.

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The question examined in the abstract.

Is it in itself desirable that man should obtain control over the instinct of reproduction, so as to determine when its gratification shall produce offspring, and when it shall not ?

But that common sense is so scarce an article, and that the various superstitions of the nursery pervade the opinions and cramp the enquiries, even of after-life—but for this, the very statement of the question might suffice to obtain for it the assent of every rational being.

Nothing so elevates man above the brute creation, as the power he obtains over his instincts. The lower animal follows them blindly, unreflectingly.—The serpent gorges himself; the bull fights even to death with his rival of the pasture—the dog makes deadly war for a bone. They know nothing of progressive improvement. They are all as wise, and no wiser, than the elephant or the beaver of two

thousand years ago. Man alone has the power to improve, cultivate, elevate his nature from generation to generation. He alone can control his instincts by reflection of consequences, and regulate his passions by the precepts of wisdom.

It is strange that even at this period of the world, we should have to remind each other, that all knowledge of facts is useful ; or, at the least, cannot be injurious. The knowledge of some facts may be important—the knowledge of none is inischievous. A human being is a puppet—a slave, if his ignorance is to be the safeguard of his virtue. Nor shall we know where to stop, if we follow up this principle. Shall we give our sons lessons in mechanics, but they may thereby learn to pick locks? Shall we teach them to read, but they may thus obtain access to falsehood and folly. Shall we instruct them in writing, but they may become forgers ? Such in effect, was the reasoning of men in the dark ages.

When Walter Scott puts into the mouth of Lord Douglass, on the discovery of Marmion's treachery, the following exclamation, it is strictly in accordance with the spirit and prevailing opinions of the times :

"A letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed !
Did ever knight so foul a deed !
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the king praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line ;
So swore I—and so swear I still—
Let my boy bishop fret his fill."

But the days are gone by when ignorance may be the safeguard of virtue. The only rock foundation for virtue is knowledge.

There is no fact, in physicks or in morals, that ought to be concealed from the enquiring mind. Let that parent who thinks to secure his son's honesty or his daughter's innocence by keeping back from them facts,—let that parent know that he is building up their morality on a sandy foundation. The rains and the floods of the world's influence shall beat upon that virtue, and great shall be the fall thereof.

If man, then, can obtain control over this most important of instincts, it is in principle, right that he should know it. If men, after obtaining such knowledge, think fit not to use it—if they deem it nobler

and more virtuous to follow each animal impulse, like the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, without a thought of its consequences, or an enquiry into its nature, then let them do so. The knowledge that they have the power to act more like rational beings, will not injure, if it fail to benefit them.—They are at perfect liberty to set it aside, to neglect it, to forget it if they can. Only let them show common sense enough to permit that others, who are more slow to incur sacred responsibilities, and more willing to give reason the control of instinct, should obtain the requisite knowledge, and follow out their prudent resolutions.

If this little book were in the hands of every adult in the United States, not one would need profit by it unless he sees fit. Nor will any man admit that he can possibly be injured by it. Oh, no ! His virtue can bear any quantity of light. But then his neighbours, or his sons, or his daughters !

This would lead me to discuss the social bearings of the questions. But, as conceiving it more in order, I shall first speak of it in connection with political economy.

CHAPTER IV.

The question in connection with Political Economy.

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The question in connection with Political Economy.

The population question, as it is called, has of late years occupied much attention, especially in Great Britain. It was first prominently brought forward and discussed through too large volumes by Malthus, an English clergyman. Godwin &c. all celebrated cotemporary writers, have all discussed with more or less reserve, and at greater or less length.

Malthus' work has become the text book of a large political economist party in England. His doctrine is that "population unrestrained, will advance beyond the means of subsistence." And do we not see it daily in our own country. He recommends, as a preventive of the growing evils, celibacy till a late age, say thirty years ; and he asserts that unless this "moral restraint" is exerted, vice, poverty, and misery will and must become the checks to population. His book, in my opinion, has done mischief. I devise innocent checks, without deviating from the

demands of nature, or the law of the Prophets, or Divine laws. They may be used or they may be let alone.

It is in vain to argue with these defenders of the evils that be, that the day of overstocking is afar off. They tell you it must come at last ; and that the more you do to remove vice and misery—those destroyers of population—the sooner it will come. And what reply can one make to the argument in the abstract ? I believe it to be proved that population, unrestrained, will double itself on an average every twenty five years.

If so, it is evident to a demonstration, that if population be not restrained, morally or immorally, the earth will at last furnish no foothold for the human beings that will cover it.

Take a medium calculation as to the natural rate of increase, and say that population unrestrained will double itself every thirty five years. That it has done so (without reckoning the increase from emigration) in many parts of this continent, is certain.

It appears evident, then, to a demonstration, that population cannot be suffered to increase unrestrained

for more than a very few hundred years. We are thus compelled to admit to Malthus, that sooner or later, some restraint or other to population must be employed; and compelled to admit to his aristocratic disciples, that if no other better restraint than celibacy, vice and misery will be found, then vice and misery will be. They are the lot of man, from generation to generation.

Let those, then, who cry out against this little Treatise, be told that though they may postpone the question, no human power can evade it. It must come up. Had the friends of reform been left to choose their own time, it might, perhaps with advantage, been postponed. And it is an imaginable case, that prejudice might delay it until a general famine or a universal civil war became the frightful check. But will any man or woman of common sense argue the propriety of suffering such a crisis to approach? I should say no—by no means. Make use of my innocent checks, and you will save expense, trouble, and at the same time preserve your wives from pain, disease, and many a sorrowful tear. As all reasonable persons must know that frequent and habitual

labours of that kind does injure their health and frequently produce diseases which will cause them to wear out the remainder of their days without enjoyment of any kind. Reader, read with attention, and judge without prejudice.

Must the poor raise children to fill our Poor Houses, our jails, our state prisons, or can we all be placed on an equal standing with our neighbours, both as it regards increase of our children and an increase of property ? So that we may be able to support our own children in a comfortable way without placing them into the hands of the rich planters.— Gentle reader, must poor people raise children to be slaves or paupers ? The answer can be no ! with those that read this little book, and comply rigidly with its contents, and pursue the courses laid before them.

Must parents be always slaves for their children, and die poor at last ?—the answer as above.

I pray my readers, then, distinctly to observe how the matter stands. Population, unrestrained, must increase beyond the possibility of the earth and its

produce to support. At present it is restrained by vice and misery.

The only remedy which the orthodox of the English clergymen permits him to propose is late marriages. The most enlightened observers of mankind are agreed, that nothing contributes so positively and immediately to demoralize a nation, as when its youth refrain, until a late period, from forming respectable connections with the other sex. The frightful increase of prostitutes, the destruction of health, the rapid spread of intemperance, the ruin of moral feelings, are, to the mass, the certain consequences. Individuals there are, who escape the contagion—individuals whose better feelings revolt under any temptation, from the mercenary embrace, or the Circcean cup of intoxication : but these are exceptions only.

The mass must have their pleasures—the pleasures of intellectual intercourse, of unbought affection,—and of good taste and good feeling, if they can ; but if they cannot, then such pleasures (alas ! that language should be perverted to entitle them to the

name!) as the sacrifice of money and the ruin of body and mind can purchase.*

Before concluding this chapter, let me state distinctly, that I by no means agree with Malthus and other political economists in believing, that at this moment there is an actual excess of population in any country, (China perhaps excepted) in the known world. I believe that there is more than enough land in every country of Europe to support, in perfect comfort, all their present inhabitants.

That they are not supported in comfort, is in my opinion attributable, not to over-population, but to mal-government. Monopolies favour the rich, taxes oppress the poor—commercial rivalry grinds its victims to the dust.

To such causes as these, and not to over-population at the time being, is the actual distress (felt more or less over the civilized world) to be attributed. Thus, if the enemies of reform would but let us alone, we might safely postpone to other important practical

* Lawrence, the ingenious author of the "Empire of the Nairs," says, shrewdly enough, "wherever the women are prudes, the men will be drunkards."

discussions, this population question. But they will not.

They force it upon us: and though it might have evinced want of judgement to obtrude it unnecessarily or prematurely on the public, it would betray cowardice to evade it now when thrust upon us.

Enough has been said, probably, in this chapter, to determine the question, whether it is, or is not, desirable, in a political point of view, that some check to population be sought and disclosed—some moral restraint that shall not, like vice and misery, be demoralizing, nor, like late marriages, be asceticous and impracticable and deviating from the laws of Nature, and Divine laws.



CHAPTER V.

The question considered in its social bearing.

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This is by far the most important branch of the question. The evils caused by an overstocking of the world, however inevitable, are distant; and an abstract view of the subject, if even unanswerable, does not come home to the mind with the force of a detailed reality. What would be the probable effect in social life, if mankind obtained and exercised a control over the instinct of reproduction? My settled conviction is—and I am prepared to defend it—that the effect would be salutary, moral, civilizing:—that it would prevent many crimes, and more unhappy spent hours of the poor females, (who endure all but death to bring their children into this world to endure the same punishment) and that it would lessen intemperance and profligacy—that it would polish the manners and improve the moral feelings—that it would relieve the burthen of the poor, and the cares, of the rich—that it would most essentially benefit the

rising generation, by enabling parents generally more carefully to educate, and more comfortably to provide for their offspring, instead of keeping them nosed round by ignorance and superstition.

Let us look solely to the situation of married persons. Is it not a notorious fact that the families of the married often increase beyond what a regard for the young beings coming into the world, the happiness of those who give them birth, would dictate? (the answer might be—take them to the poor house—the farmers can pay their board there!) And an answer to that might be—they have children enough there already.)

In how many instances does the hard-working father, and more especially the mother of a poor family, remain slaves through their lives, tugging at the oar of incessant labour, toiling to, and living only to die poor; when, if their offspring had been limited to two or three children only, they might have enjoyed comfort and comparative affluence! How often is the health of the mother—giving birth every year to an infant—(happy if not twins! or a monster)—and compelled to toil on, even at those times when na-

ture imperiously calls for some relief from daily drudgery—how often is the mother's comfort, health —nay, her life, thus sacrificed ! or, if care and toil have weighed down the spirits, and at last broken the health of the father, how often is the widow left unable, with the most virtuous intentions, to save her fatherless offspring from becoming degraded objects of charity or profligate votaries of vice ! Fathers and mothers ! not you who have your nursery and your nursery maids, and who leave your children at home, to frequent the crowded rout, or to glitter in the over-heated ball room ; but you, by the labour of whose hands your children are to live, and who, as you count their rising numbers, sigh to think how soon sickness or misfortune may lessen those wages which are now but just sufficient to afford them bread—fathers and mothers in humble life !—to you my argument comes home, with the force of reality. Others may impugn —may ridicule it. But from bitter experience you know and feel its truth.

It will be said, that government ought to provide for the support and education of all the children of the land. No one is less inclined to conform to

that position than I ; but it does not support and educate them. And, if it did, a period must come at last, when even such an act of justice would be no relief from the evils of over-population. Yet, this is not all. Every physician knows, that there are many women so constituted that they cannot give birth to healthy, sometimes not to living children.— Is it desirable—is it moral, that such women should become pregnant ? Yet this is continually the case, the warnings of physicians to the contrary notwithstanding.

Others there are who ought never to become parents ; because, if they do, it is only to transmit to their offspring grievous hereditary diseases ; perhaps that worst of all diseases, insanity. Yet, they will not lead a life of celibacy. They marry. They become parents, and the world suffers by it. That a human being should give birth to a child, knowing that he transmits to it hereditary disease, is, in my opinion an immorality. But it is a folly to expect that we can induce all such persons to live the lives of Shakers. Neither is it necessary. All that duty requires of them is to refrain from becoming parents.

Who can estimate the beneficial effect which rational moral restraint may thus have on the health, beauty and physical improvement of our race, throughout future generations.

But apart from these latter considerations, is it not most plainly, clearly, uncontrollably desirable, that parents should have the power to limit their offspring, whether they choose to exercise it or not? Who can lose by having this power? and how many may gain?—may gain competency for themselves, and the opportunity carefully to educate and provide for their children! How many may escape the jarrings, the quarrels, the disorder, the anxiety, which an overgrown family two often cause in the domestic circle! Will it be asserted—and I know no other even plausible reply to these facts and arguments—will it be asserted that the thing is in itself immoral or unseemly? I deny it; and I point to the population of France, in justification of my denial.

Where will you find on the face of the globe, a more polished or civilized nation than the French, or one more punctiliously alive to any rudeness, coarseness or indecorum? You will find none. The French

are scrupulously on these points to a proverb. Yet as every intelligent traveller in France must have remarked, there is scarcely to be found among the middle or upper classes, (and seldom even among the working classes,) such a thing as a large family—very seldom have more than three or four children. A French lady of the utmost delicacy and respectability will, in common conversation, say as simply--(aye, and as innocently, whatever the self righteous prude may aver to the contrary) as she would proffer any common remark about the weather, “I have three children: my husband and I think that is as many as we can do justice to, and I do not intend to have any more.” I have stated facts—facts which no traveller who has visited Paris, and seen any of the domestic life of its inhabitants will attempt to deny.

However heterodox, then, my view of the subject may be in this country, I am supported in it by the opinion and the practice of the most refined and most social, cultivated nation in the world.

It is evident then, that to married persons the power of limiting their offspring to their circumstances, is most desirable. It may often promote the harmony,

peace, and comfort of families : sometimes it may save from bankruptcy and ruin, and sometimes it may rescue the mother from premature death. In no case can it, by possibility, be worse than superfluous. In no case can it be mischievous.

If the moral feelings were carefully cultivated--if we were taught to consult in every thing rather the welfare of those we love than our own, how strongly would these arguments be felt! Surely it may well be a question whether it be desirable, or whether any man ought to ask that the whole life of an intellectual cultivated woman, should be spent in bearing a family of twelve or fifteen children, to the ruin perhaps of her constitution, if not the overstocking of the world.—No man ought to require or expect it.

But I pass from the case of married persons to that of young men and women who have yet formed no matrimonial connection. In the present state of the world, when public opinion stamps with opprobrium every sexual connection which has not received the sanction of an oath, almost all young persons, on reaching the age of maturity desire to marry. The heart must be very cold or very isolated, that does not

and some object on which to bestow his attention. Thus, early marriages would be almost universal, did not prudential considerations interfere. The young man thinks, I must not marry yet—I cannot support a family—I must make money first, and think of a matrimonial settlement afterward. And thus he goes to making money, fully and sincerely resolved, in a few years, to share it with her whom he now loves. But passions are strong and temptations great. Curiosity perhaps introduces him into the company of those poor creatures whom society first reduces to a dependence on the most miserable of mercenary trades, and then curses for being what she has made them. There his health and his moral feelings alike make shipwreck. The affections he had thought to treasure up for their first object, are chilled by dissipation and blunted by excess. He is a man of pleasure—a man of the world. He laughs at the romance of his youth, and marries a fortune. If gaudy equipage and gay parties confer happiness, he is happy.

But, my readers, will this support a proud wife and a large family of children of that grade? No! —

But had he married the true object of his choice, and simply delayed becoming a father until his prospects seemed to warrant it, how different might have been his lot! Until men and women are absolved from the fear of becoming parents, except when they themselves desire it, they ever will form mercenary and demoralizing connections, and seek in dissipation the happiness they might have found in domestic life.—Let us say, then, if we will, that the youth who thus sacrifices the present for the future, chooses wisely between two evils, profligacy and asceticism. This is true: it is not good for a man to be alone. It is for no man's or woman's happiness or benefit, that they should be condemned to Shakerism. It is a violence done to the feelings, and an injury to the character. A life of rigid celibacy, though infinitely preferable to a life of dissipation, is yet fraught with many evils. The mind is uneasy and unsettled, and the judgment warped.

I shall now speak of seduction. And let me ask what is it gives to the arts of seduction their sting, and stamps to the world its victim? Why is it, that the man goes free, and enters society again almost

courted and applauded for his treachery, while the woman is a mark for the finger of reproach, and a butt for the tongue of scandal? Because she bears about her the mark of what is called her disgrace.— She becomes a mother, because she cannot help her passion—she loves the wretch who violates her chastity—who pretends to love her in return, and presses her to his bosom with all the ardour of friendship, while he plunges the assassins dagger in her heart. Poor woman! she cannot help herself, while the tender passion rules within her. Oh! wretched man, remember this! have compassion on those who tenderly love you—be sincere in all your words—do not enjoy yourself at the expense of others, if you venture as far as to dispossess them of their virtue, use some good and safe check that may liberate them from scorn—that she may not become a mother, that society may have something tangible against which to direct its anathemas. Nine tenths, at least, of the misery and ruin which are caused by seduction, even in the present state of public opinion on the subject, result from cases of pregnancy. Perhaps the unfeeling selfishness of him who fears to become a father,

administers some noxious drug to produce abortion ; for even such scenes our courts of justice disclose ! Perhaps the frenzy of the wretched mother takes the life of her infant, or seeks in suicide the consummation of her wrongs and her woes ! or the false lover takes her to an asylum, there to remain with the insane for a while until she regains her health. If, then, we cannot do all shall we neglect a part ?

If we cannot prevent every misery which man's selfishness and the world's cruelty entail on a sex which it ought to be our pride and honour to cherish and defend. Let us prevent as many as we can.— If we cannot persuade society to revoke its unmanly and unchristian* persecution of those who are often the best and gentlest of its members, let us at least give to woman what defence we may against its violence.

And now let my readers pause. Let them review the various arguments I have placed before them.— Let them reflect how intimately the instinct of which

* Jesus said unto her, " Neither do I condemn thee."— John viii, 2.

Interest is connected with the social welfare of society.—Let them bear in mind, that just in proportion to its social influence. Is it not important that we should know how to control and govern it?—that, (and that we ought to prize much more highly) may save our companions and our offspring from suffering or misery—that by such knowledge the young may form virtuous connections, instead of becoming profligates or ascetics; that by it early marriage is deprived of its heaviest consequences, and seduction of its sharpest sting—that by it man may be saved from moral ruin, and woman from desolating dishonour—that by it the first pure affections may be soothed and satisfied, instead of being thwarted or destroyed—let them call to mind all this, and then let them say, whether the possession of such control be not a blessing.

It now remains, after having in this and the preceding Chapters, spoken of the desirability of obtaining control over the instinct of reproduction, to present my views of its practicability. This I have reserved for the next Chapter, promising in this place that, as the reader is doubtless now fully conscious

of the magnitude of the evils complained of, he will with redoubled interest peruse the remedy pointed out.



CHAPTER VI.

*The subject considered in its immediate connection
with Physiology, showing actual means, &c.*



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In this world the value of labour is too often estimated almost in proportion to its inutility, so in physical science, contested questions seem to have attracted attention and engaged research, almost in the inverse ratio of their practical importance. We have a hundred learned hypotheses for one decisive practical experiment. We have many thousands of volumes written to explain fanciful theories, and scarcely as many dozens to record ascertained facts.

It is not my intention, in discussing this branch of the subject, to examine the hundred ingenious theories of generation which ancient and modern physiologists have put forth. I shall not enquire whether the future human being owes its first existence, as Hippocrates and Galen asserted, and Buffon very ingeniously supports, to the union of two given fluids, each a sort of extract of the body of the parent, and

composed of organic particles similar to the future offspring ; or whether, as Harvey and Haller teach, the embryo reposes in the ovum until vivified by the seminal fluid, or perhaps only the aura seminalis. I leave these and fifty other hypotheses as ingenius and as useless, to be discussed by those who seem to make it a point of honour to leave no fact unexplained by some imagined theory ; and I descend at once to the terra firma of positive experience and actual observation.

I have taken great pains to ascertain the opinions of the most enlightened physicians on this subject—(opinions which popular prejudice will not permit them to offer publicly in their works) and as the principal religion and politics of the present day is nothing but dollars and cents, they would not publish such opinions on account of self-interest. My friends and fellow readers, I make it openly known to you, an enlightened people, and as we are all true Americans, let us enjoy our liberty. If every person were to show to this world their true character—openly without flying under a false cloak, there would be less roguery and less mischief—less law would be

required to regulate and detect illegitimate children.

Thus, though I pretend not to speak positively to the detail of a subject, which will then only be fully understood when men acquire sense enough simply and unreservedly to discuss it, I may venture to assure my readers that the main fact is incontrovertible. I shall adduce such facts in proof of this as may occur to me in the course of this investigation. How various and contradictory the different theories of generation, almost all physiologists are agreed that the entrance of the sperm itself (or of some volatile particles proceeding from it) into the uterus, must precede conception. This it was that probably first suggested the possibility of preventing conception at will.

The modes of preventing it, which have been adopting in different nations are various. Those which have come to my knowledge are as follows, viz:

First: It consists of complete withdrawal, on the part of the man immediately previous to emission.—That is all case, is effectual. It may be objected, that the practice requires a mental effort and partial withdrawal is not sufficient always.

Second: The check chiefly recommended by me. It consists in the introduction into the vagina of a small damp sponge previous to coition, which is immediately afterwards withdrawn by means of a very narrow silk braid or ribband attached to it. And it is said, that if used of the size of a hen's egg.

It is unnecessary to add, that the sponge should be clean—that it should be cleared of the particles of lime which is frequently found of the coarse kind (it ought to be the fine white kind for that purpose) after withdrawing this sponge another should be introduced fastened to a small stick four or five inches long—moistened with simple water is sufficient.—This last should be used as a swab to clear the vagina of the semen. This sponge should be fastened on the stick in such a manner as to leave the bulk as large as a turkey's egg, or as large as a large hen's egg, (according to the size of the vagina, as the vagina of women differ sometimes considerable) this remedy is a perfectly safe and sure preventive, if used of a proper size.

This remedy has been used by several of my acquaintances, without failure—the anatomy of the parts

alone, besides other concurring proofs, fairly demonstrate it to any unprejudiced mind.

Those who use it will be safe without fail,

Without getting a male or female—

Those who venture on this route,

Will continue to grow and not to sprout.

Third: The following check has been for many years employed by the nobility, and also partially by other classes in England :

It consists in the use, by the man, of a covering made of very fine, smooth and delicately prepared skin, (commonly called Kundum's). It has been employed also to guard against syphilis and gonorrhœ, and is mentioned in some English works.* The efficacy of this method is certain; and it may therefore be used by those who cannot, or will not, employ the first or second checks. It is well known in France and all over the continent; but is not by any means so generally employed, except against syphilis, as the check first mentioned.

* See Gray's "Supplement to the Pharmacopœ," page 486, published by Underwood, London,

It has this advantage, that all persons, whatever their temperament, may find in it an infallible preventive.

The fourth consists of injections. Take sulphate zink, [white vitriol] dissolve one drachm in a half pint water, and inject it in the vagina after coition, immediately after a withdrawal. The solution should be warm as urine at the time of using it.

The syringe should be the common female syringe —used twice full is sufficient to destroy the semen or productive matter. This, also, can be used with safety, and as this injection is a preventive to the disease so frequently known among women by the name of whites, it also is a means that encourages cleanliness in all cases. I recommend it for that purpose, if not to destroy the productive matter.

My readers may implicitly depend on the accuracy of the facts I have stated. Though in the present state of public opinion, I may not, for obvious reasons, give names in proof, yet it is evident that I cannot have the shadow of a motive to mislead or deceive. For it is from personal experience I speak of the sponge, &c. The sponge is a perfectly safe and

sure preventive, and it is certainly advisable in point of cleanliness. A decent respectable female will have no objection in using the same after she has once used it, and found that it meets her expectations—which I know it will.



CHAPTER VII.

Concluding Remarks.



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The only seeming objection of much weight that can be brought against diffusing a knowledge of checks, is, that it will serve to increase illegal connections. Now this is exactly the contrary effect of that which those who have diffused such knowledge must confidently believe will arise from it. To diminish such connections, is indeed one of the grand objects of this publication—an object which laws and prisons cannot, or at least do not accomplish.

Why is there so much prostitution in the land ?--The true answer to the question is not, and never will be, because the people have become acquainted with certain facts in Physiology. It is because there are so many unmarried men and women—men of dissipation and profligacy, owing to their not having married in their younger days, and settled substantially in life. But why are there so many unmarried people in the country ? Not because young hearts,

when they arrive at the age of maturity, do not desire to marry, but because prudential circumstances &c. interfere.

The truth then is this, there is so much of illegal connection in the land because the people had not, twenty years ago, that very information which it would seem, some, doubtless through want of due reflection, are apprehensive will increase this evil.— I might quote pages to the point from “Every woman’s Book.”

But I fear my communication would be too lengthy. I content myself with a few lines. But when it has become the custom here as elsewhere to limit the number of children, so that none need have more than they wish, all men will take a wife—all men will marry while young. Debauchery will diminish—while good morals and religious duties will be promoted. There would be a great many more families, and less houses of ill fame, but not as many overgrown and poverty stricken families.

It has been said, that it is best to let nature take her course. [If that be true physicians are of no use —nature does all.] In this sense there is nothing

unnatural in the universe. But if we limit the sense of the word nature, so as not to include what we mean by art, then is civilized life one continued warfare against nature. It is by art that we subdue the forest—by art we contend against the elements—by art we combat the natural tendency of disease, &c.

As to the outrageous slander which here and there one has been heard to utter against the fair sex, in saying that fear of conception is the foundation of their chastity, it must be the sentiment of a “carnal heart,” which has been peculiarly unfortunate in its acquaintances. “To the pure all things are pure.”

I have not as clear a head and as pure a heart as many of them that pretend to be so fine and honest. [Yes, I might say pretended professors !]

Every physician knows that Chlorosis (green sickness) is a dangerous and frequently a fatal disease to young females, where, if they could indulge in sensual pleasures with the other sex, without the fear of becoming mothers, would be an infallible cure for the disease. And without it the disease will often baffle the most learned and skillful physicians, until death closes the tragic scene. Oh ! mothers—cruel

mothers!!! will you let your daughters remain in darkness without correct information ?

I could spread this little volume to a great number of pages in the concluding remarks. But I think it unnecesary.

Chastity and temperance are the first virtues, but most rarely practised, either by young or old, married or unmarried persons, even when they all most scrupulously conform to the letter of the law.

Those that conform to nature's law,
Let them read this and hold their jaw—

Those who do not nature's course pursue,
Don't say this little work's not true.

Now, if a better system should be thine,
Impart it freely or make use of mine.

I am the public's most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the South-
ern District of New-York, Anno Domini 1836, by
THE AUTHOR.

